

**At a meeting of the CULTURE AND LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Errington in the Chair

Councillors Ellis, P. Gibson, T. Martin, Mordey, Symonds, Wake and Wares

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the Committee on behalf of Councillors Foster, G. Hall, Howe and J.B. Scott.

**Minutes of the last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on the progress in relation to the policy review on music venues in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Christine Alder, Chairman of Bishopwearmouth Choir, presented a CD of their works and was on hand to answer Members' questions:-

- Where does the choir perform their concerts?

Ms. Alder advised that the choir almost always performed at Sunderland Minster.

- Is that due to lack of venues in Sunderland?

Ms. Alder informed Members that due to the number of people in the choir and orchestra, Sunderland Minster was the only venue big enough to accommodate everyone.

- How much are tickets for the concerts?

Ms. Alder advised that tickets are priced at £10 for adults and £8 for concessionary tickets.

Ms. Alder also advised that due to mounting expenses, Bishopwearmouth Choir almost always lose money on concerts. They did try to attract larger audiences by including songs by the Carpenters and also a jazz trio. In this instance they almost broke even financially.

- You had previously been funded by the Arts Council, have you tried the City Council for funding?

Ms. Alder informed Members that Bishopwearmouth Choir had previously received funding, but this had ceased.

As the choir had been fortunate in having been left a legacy, applications would be unsuccessful due to the choir having money in the bank.

- Members advised that having money in the bank should not discourage Bishopwearmouth Choir from applying for funding.
- How do you advertise?

Ms. Alder advised that the Choir advertise their events through Members, their website and bill posters erected in public areas.

- Do you perform outside of Sunderland?

Ms. Alder informed Members that Bishopwearmouth Choir had in the past played at Durham Cathedral and the City Hall in Newcastle for the Last Night of the Proms.

The Choir had a loyal following in Sunderland which they probably would not get outside of the area as the music is not to everyone's taste.

There were plans for a joint concert with Ryton Choir at the Sage in the future.

- Have you looked at Holy Trinity Church or the Church at Park Lane as possible venues?

Ms. Alder advised that the Holy Trinity Church could only seat 220 people. The venue had been considered for a summer concert, but the facilities were not to the standard of the Minster.

Ms. Alder did not know if the church at Park Lane would be able to accommodate all of the Bishopwearmouth Choir.

- Have you applied to perform in the Community Day events at the Empire Theatre?

Ms. Alder advised that as the Empire holds up to 1,000 people, Bishopwearmouth Choir would not attract that number of people, giving the effect of "singing to an empty house".

- Would an open air arena be of any benefit?

Ms. Alder advised that weather conditions would have to be considered with an open air arena.

- The Crowtree has held Mayor's Charity events in the past, have you considered leisure centres?

Ms. Alder advised that leisure centres don't have the right ambience for music as they aren't built for that purpose, unlike the Sage.

- What is the age range of members in the Bishopwearmouth Choir?

Ms. Alder advised that the Bishopwearmouth Choir has members as young as 18 years old to members who have been singing for over 60 years.

The Choir also has a group of young people, aged from year five upwards, who meet to develop their musical skills and interest. The group gives concerts in its own right and participates in the main Choral Society performances.

- What would be the ideal venue for the Bishopwearmouth Choir?

Ms. Alder informed Members that the Sage Concert Hall is an ideal venue. If a venue were to be built, it should look to hold 500-600 people, have comfortable seats, be able to accommodate an orchestra of 80 and a choir of 200.

The venue would need good site facilities, i.e. food, drink and toilets. Parking and security would also need to be considered.

If there was to be one venue, advertising of other events could attract audiences attending different concerts. Consideration needs to be given on

how to attract people out to pay money to see a concert, when they could listen to a CD at home.

Having thanked Ms. Alder for her attendance, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report, timetable and Ms. Alder's comments be noted and that the evidence gathered be used as part of the Committee's research for the policy review on Sunderland venues.

### **Barnes Park Regeneration Update – Parks for People Funding**

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members on the Parks for People Big Lottery Funding Stage 2 application for Barnes Park.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Helen Peverley, Project and Service Development Manager, presented the report and was on hand to answer Members' queries.

Members raised the following issues:-

- The Regeneration only goes as far as Etrick Grove, what about the area beyond?

Ms. Peverley advised that the Heritage Fund only recognised the area up to the original railings of the park but the directorate was hoping to get extra funding on Barnes Park extension.

- Is the Heritage Lottery Fund drying up?

Ms. Peverley informed Members that it appeared the funds had significantly reduced, which seemed to have happened with all lottery funds.

- Do the plans include a Bowling Pavilion?

Ms. Peverley advised that funding had not been secured for this, but the directorate was working with bowling groups and planned to change the points of access to enhance the playing area.

The Heritage Lottery do not fund sports pavilions, this would have to go to the Sports Heritage for consideration.

- Members queried the role of the Community and Education Officer mentioned within the report

Ms. Peverley advised that the position would be supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

### **Request for Inclusion of an Item – Audit of Listed Buildings**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Review Committee Work Programme to look into a full audit of listed buildings, including the works required and the feasibility of accessing external funding for such works.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor G. Hall requested the inclusion of the item but was unable to attend the meeting, therefore, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Request for Inclusion of an Item – Blue Flag Status – Roker and Seaburn**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Review Committee Work Programme to look into the Blue Flag criteria and water quality. Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency would be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss this.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor G. Hall requested the inclusion of the item but was unable to attend the meeting, therefore it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Request for Inclusion of an Item – Fishing across Sunderland**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Review Committee Work Programme to look into the Council's approach and development of fishing resources across Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor T. Martin requested the item to be included as the safety of Hendon beach was being looked into, but the fishing facilities were not included in that. Councillor T. Martin also requested that the Committee look at comparable sites.

Members endorsed Councillor T. Martin's request and raised the following concerns:-

- The Council must proceed with caution when considering fishing facilities and the safety measures needed, particularly in light of the introduction of legislation regarding corporate manslaughter..
  - Members of the public should be involved in consultation, not just members of fishing clubs.
6. RESOLVED that a future report on fishing across Sunderland be brought back to the Committee.

### **Work Programme 2008-09**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide for Members' information the current Work Programme for the Committee's work during the 2008/09 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members enquired if a date had been arranged for the visit of the football changing facilities agreed at January 2008 Committee.

Nigel Cummings, Review Co-ordinator, advised that the visit would be included in the annual report on Sport and Leisure due before the Committee in February 2009.

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted for information.

### **Policy Development and Review 2008/09: Focus Group – Venue Promoters**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with detailed information from the recent Focus Group held with venue promoters and owners in the City as part of the Policy Review 'A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and that the evidence gathered be used within the final policy review report of the Culture and Leisure Review Committee.

## **Policy Development and Review 2008/09: Focus Group – Oxclose Music Project**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with detailed information from the recent Focus Group held with young people from Oxclose Music Project as part of the Policy Review 'A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

9. RESOLVED that the report be received and that the evidence gathered be used within the final policy review report of the Culture and Leisure Review Committee.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) D. ERRINGTON,  
Chairman.